AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-5 (cancelled)

6. (New) An automatic paper feed apparatus comprising:

a feed roller for automatically feeding papers, when the papers are contained in a cassette in a stacked state, in order from an uppermost one of the papers; and

a holding member constructed and arranged to be positioned on the uppermost one of the papers such that when said feed roller automatically feeds the uppermost one of the papers a friction force exists between said holding member and the uppermost one of the papers, with

(i) that component of the friction force resulting from said holding member being generated solely from a weight of said holding member and a coefficient of friction of a surface of said holding member that contacts the uppermost one of the papers, and

(ii) the friction force being weaker than a friction force existing between said feed roller and the uppermost one of the papers.

7. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

an engagement portion on a rear end portion of said holding member, wherein said engagement portion is constructed and arranged to be engaged with the cassette such that said holding member becomes attached to the cassette so as to be slidable in a paper feed direction.

8. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

said engagement portion is constructed and arranged to be engaged with the cassette by being constructed and arranged to be engaged with a guide member in the cassette, which guide member is to guide rear ends of the papers.

9. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the papers are medicine bags.

10. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said holding member has a form of a sheet, and further comprising:

a first conductive layer on a top surface of said holding member; and

a second conductive layer on a bottom surface of said holding member,

with said first conductive layer being of a material different than a material of said second conductive layer.

11. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said holding member comprises a flexible sheet.

12. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said flexible sheet is constructed and arranged to contact a paper immediately adjacent the uppermost one of the papers as the uppermost one of the papers is being fed by said feed roller.

13. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said flexible sheet comprises a urethane rubber flexible sheet or a silicon rubber flexible sheet.

14. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said flexible sheet is constructed and arranged to simultaneously contact the uppermost one of the papers and a paper immediately adjacent the uppermost one of the papers, as the uppermost one of the papers is being fed by said feed roller.

15. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

a mechanism for allowing said holding member to slidably move in a direction of thickness of the papers, when in the cassette in the stacked state, in response to the weight of the holding member, and for limiting movement of said holding member in a paper feed direction.

16. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said mechanism comprises

(i) a guide member to be fixed to the cassette so as to extend in the direction of thickness of the papers when in the cassette in the stacked state, and

(ii) a through hole, in said holding member, through which said guide member is to be loosely inserted.

17. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said guide member is on a rear side of the papers when in the cassette in the stacked state.

18. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said through hole is in a rear end of said holding member.

19. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each of the papers is of a differing thickness.

20. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 19, wherein each of the papers comprises a bag having folded portions.

21. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the bag is a medicine bag.

22. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said holding member is flaccid.

23. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said holding member comprises a urethane rubber sheet or a silicon rubber sheet.

24. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 23, further comprising:

a first conductive layer on a top surface of said urethane rubber sheet or silicon rubber sheet; and

a second conductive layer on a bottom surface of said urethane rubber sheet or silicon rubber sheet,

with said first conductive layer being of a material different than a material of said second conductive layer.

25. (New) The automatic paper feed apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising:

a first conductive layer on a top surface of said holding member; and

a second conductive layer on a bottom surface of said holding member,

with said first conductive layer being of a material different than a material of said second conductive layer.